

Boston, Saturday Sept. 26. 1846.

I have had a very particular pleasure, my dear Sir, in reading and re-reading your full & interesting letter of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>d</sup>, & 3<sup>d</sup> inst., which I received last Sunday evening, on returning home after a three days' absence, in attendance upon the quarterly meeting of our County Antislavery Society. I was so glad that you had met Mr. Garrison, and that your heart had so kindly warmed towards him! I felt thankful! And I do, for my poor self, most heartily thank you and all the Bristol friends for giving so generous and hearty a reception to Mr. Garrison and to Frederic Douglass. I am very glad that, upon acquaintance, you found that his powers <sup>(I now speak of Douglass)</sup> had not been overrated by his friends and fellow-labourers in the Antislavery Cause. I hope that the exertions which you were under the necessity of making at Bristol, in entertaining your guests, in arranging the meetings, &c. and the excitement it must necessarily have caused, have not been too much for your strength. I hope, when I next hear, to learn that you have had no cause to repent of what you have so freely and heartily done for those men and for the Cause they serve.

I have also to thank you for a previous letter, from Lynton, Dated July 16. It is one of my greatest pleasures to receive a letter from my Bristol correspondents, and yours are <sup>usually</sup> so full and particular, and in every other respect so full of interest to me, that I should account their discontinuance a real privation and calamity. I shall reply to these 2 letters in connexion; and speak also of other matters, as I may find time to do. And first, —

~~Why I am here.~~ I came to Boston, on Thursday last, to attend a public meeting, held with reference to a Slave Case which recently occurred in the very midst of the good City of Boston. The facts are briefly these; — the commerce between Boston & New Orleans, sustained several regular lines of packet vessels; on board one of those vessels,

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Mr. May

(the Brig Ottoman, Capt. Hannum)

When she had been a week at sea, on her passage from N.O. to Boston, there was discovered a young negro fellow. He was found, nearly or quite naked, among the cargo in the hold; he besought the steward (or sailor) who discovered him not to make it known to the Captain; but in some way, the Captain found out that there was a fugitive ~~man~~ on board, and ordered him brought on deck. When he was brought up, he was recognised immediately as a slave, named Joseph, who used to come daily on board the ship while lying at N. Orleans to sell milk for his master. He was quite a favorite with Captain & Crew, and I supposed he felt that if he could only continue to get away from port in their company, his chance for freedom would be as good as need be. But the Captain, by a vile & selfish instinct, saw that it would be impossible for him to do any more business in N. Orleans, or with any port in a slaveholding state, if he aided in, or winked at, a slave's escape; and so, while treating the poor fellow <sup>kindly</sup> ~~roughly~~ (for anything we know to the contrary), he ordered a look-out kept from the mast-head, if they might possibly fall in with some vessel bound to N. Orleans, intending, if such should be the case, to put the slave on board and send him back. But no such vessel appeared. The Captain entered Boston harbour, anchored his brig below, and came up to the city to confer with the owners as to what should be done with poor Joseph. The determination was to send him back, by the first vessel, and it happened that these same owners had a barque nearly ready. Meanwhile the slave was to be taken ashore on one of the numerous islands in the harbour, and kept secreted there. This was done. The slave, in charge of 2 or 3 men, was put on one of the islands, & the brig came up to the city. The slave watched an opportunity, and got away from the island in a boat. He rowed vigorously, but was soon pursued by his keepers. He landed on a point <sup>of the main land,</sup> called South Boston, and took his way towards the city proper. He had passed through the quarter, called South Boston (a place of 6 or 8000 people), and was crossing one of the bridges which lead to the city, when he was overtaken by his pursuers, & seized. An outcry was made, - the slave-catchers ~~and~~ asserted that the man had stolen a pocket-book of a

willful lie) and ~~they were~~ <sup>consequently</sup> no obstruction was put in the way  
of their securing the man and bearing him off. Had ~~it~~ <sup>the case</sup> been  
understood ~~that~~ as it was, it is almost certain the poor slave  
would have been rescued. They took him back, and ~~then~~ <sup>then</sup> ~~sent~~  
~~him~~ put <sup>him</sup> on board a boat, which was kept in the lower harbour,  
until the sailing of the barque above-referred to, when he was  
put on board of her, and is even now on his passage back to  
New Orleans, to slavery, & to his master's vengeance. In some  
way, however, but not until the last moment, the story got abroad  
that a slave was in close keeping somewhere, & was to be sent back  
to N.O. in the barque Niagara. A steamboat was chartered, and  
with a large company on board went in pursuit; but it was too  
late. The barque was seen to be approached by a small sail-boat,  
and undoubtedly the slave was then transferred to her; the wind was  
favorable, and the vessel could not be overtaken. The sail-boat was  
boarded, no slave was there, but there they found ~~the~~ Captain Mannum,  
who had doubtless gone down to see that all was sure, and no  
mistakes made. Under our blessed and "glorious" Constitution  
nothing can be done, in the way of appeal to the laws, to redress this  
wrong, or punish this Captain for his act, which is neither more nor  
less than kidnapping - the violent abduction of a man from the free  
soil of Massachusetts. Some of our best men in Boston - many of  
them not acting as abolitionists usually - ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> being exceedingly stirred,  
and indignant at this outrage, and scorning the base servility <sup>of a Boston merchant</sup> to the  
Southern Moloch, determined to call a public meeting. This meeting  
was held on Thursday eve, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, at Faneuil Hall. John Quincy  
Adams, though suffering with severe cold and hardly able to speak loud,  
came from his residence in Quincy (10 miles from the city) to preside.  
Faneuil Hall, which holds 3500 persons (standing, not sitting - <sup>in the galleries only</sup> ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~seats~~  
are provided, for ladies), was crowded to excess. It was a very enthusiastic  
and concordant assemblage; I never <sup>before</sup> have seen ~~before~~ one so unanimous -

I mean on this subject, and promiscuously gathered like this. Among the speakers were Dr. Samuel G. Howe, Principal of the <sup>Mass:</sup> Asylum for the Blind, Charles Sumner (whose name you will recognize, I presume), Stephen C. Phillips, Mayor of Salem, Wendell Phillips, Rev. Theodore Parker, Charles F. Adams (a son of J. Q. A.) The paper which I send you will show you the result of the meeting, the resolutions adopted, &c. &c. You will see a strong demand is made on the owners of the brig (John A. Pearson & Co.) to send to N. Orleans, purchase the freedom of the slave, and restore him to Boston. It is not likely that he will comply. You will perceive that my father was one of the Vice-Presidents of the Meeting. When I tell you that, <sup>only</sup> 5 or 6 years ago, he was strongly prejudiced against the Abolitionists, thought Slavery no concern of ours, & opposed Northern action in relation to it, you will readily conceive how happy we feel in seeing him take this stand. Nor is this the first time, by any means, nor the most decided way, either, in which he has evinced sympathy with the Abolition movement. - I am sure you will rejoice with me, in this. - I have made

this account longer - much longer - than I designed; but so it is, my pen runs on, and my want of the condensing faculty is again made obvious to you. { That you may not think I have exaggerated the numbers at the F. Hall meeting, I will add that some say 5000 persons were present; my Father says, not fewer than 4000.

I have written the last page, not in Boston, where I began and expected to conclude this letter, but in Leicester, on the evening of Tuesday, Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>.

The formation of the "Anti-Slavery League" is a great event, and full of hope for the Cause. I greatly lament, at what you say of the amount of influence George Thompson brings to the Cause. He seems to us here so hearty, and so strong, so devoted & fearless, that we can hardly realize his not possessing an immense influence, and especially with the people. Clarkson will give his name to the League, will he not? With that name, (unless he is regarded as super-annuated), the "League" could afford to do without the Gurneys and the Sturges. I hope Mr. Jay of Bath, Dr. Wardlaw of Glasgow, Mr. John Angell James, and others like them, may join. Is it presumptuous? They have had a prodigious influence over the religious mind here; and latterly have spoken very plainly (Jay and James, at least) of the Cowardice

and unfaithfulness of the Churches and Ministers of America. - I see, by a letter of G. Thompson's (in last Liberator) that it is contemplated having American members of the "League" - I think they will be numerous. I hope the Unitarian Ministers will join the "League"; it will have a great effect here, on the Unitarian body, and much is yet needed to arouse them to their duty. I hope William J. Fox may give some time and zeal to the cause. Lord Morpeth's official station will, I suppose, deter him from taking any part in the League; would he not, otherwise? But I might run on so long. Great things must come of the League.

Your account of the meetings at Bristol was particularly interesting to me - the breakfasts & the evening parties, as well as the public meetings. I made large extracts from your letter, & sent them to the "Standard", expecting them to appear in last week's paper (Sept. 24.); but they did not, probably were not received in season. A portion of another Bristol letter is there; evidently from Miss Carpenter, and (as I guess) to Mrs. Follen. I have no doubt yours will appear Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>. - I hope you will continue to give me information of the doings of the League, of the formation of auxiliaries, &c. - You are indeed "not weary in well-doing" for our cause; your circulars, and other efforts, in behalf of our Annual Antislavery Bazaar, are prompt, & thorough; and I hope will afford a genuine satisfaction & pleasure to all engaged.

I did hope that, before I again wrote to you, there would have appeared a full review of your "Brief Notice" in the "Standard". Under the circumstances I preferred not to attempt it myself, besides that I could not do it justice, as another could. I have therefore urged Mrs. Chapman to notice it; and I hope she will do so, but she has not, as yet. I was well pleased with Quincy's notice of it, in the Liberator, and am very glad that you found it discriminating, and properly appreciating your object, position, and motives. I am glad the tract has been so well received in your country, and that another edition may yet be needed. I should be very glad of more, ~~here~~ to distribute here. - In your note to me, from Lynton,

you said, "I despair of satisfying you, or some other very decided antislavery friends, of the tone it was necessary for me to adopt to secure circulation for the tract among that class of people I thought it most desirable to enlighten on A. S. matters." This made me feel badly. I concluded I had said something, of course, which gave you ground for this feeling of despair, so far as my own case is concerned. Surely I have had no feeling which would warrant your despair. I have never so much as entertained the question, in my own mind, whether a different style and manner of handling the subject would not have been better. I knew you were the better judge of what the Cause required in your City, and among those <sup>whose interest</sup> you wished to awaken and secure. There were, as I said to you, a few sentences which I thought not quite so decided as facts would have justified, but I did not wish to call in question your judgment in stating those matters as you did. I do not doubt, nor have I doubted, that your "Notice" is well calculated to do the work you proposed, better than one more partisan in its character. And, so far from taking any such exceptions, I feel that we owe you a deep debt of gratitude for the time and labour, and patience in sifting, comparing, & arranging ~~your~~ <sup>the</sup> materials, which you have bestowed on this contribution to our cause - one which, I am sure, must be the moving cause of many other contributions, by tongue, pen, & hand.

As to Mr. Scoble's assertion that the "Massachusetts Antislavery Society" would not fraternize with the B. & F. A. S. Society - you have doubtless seen this matter put in its true light, in an article in the "Standard" (also in "Liberator") from E. Quincy. The B. & F. Society took up, & by its own officers circulated, and so sanctioned, the malicious & crafty columns of N. Colver and others against the Mass. Society. It acted an underhanded and unmanly part, in doing so. When the matter was corrected by the Liberator, the B. & F. Society refused to publish the correction in their Journal. And

now Mr. Scoble says the Map. Society will not "fraternize", &c!  
This is adding, as the saying is, "insult to injury". They injured us,  
aroused & nurtured <sup>the</sup> prejudices against our best & worthiest men,  
and then whinnily give it out, that the Map. Society are solely to  
blame for the non-intercourse. Many of the Abolitionists here are  
very sorry F. Douglass went near their Anniversary; they say it would  
have been absolutely nothing, if he had not; and that, by going, he  
implied an <sup>approval of and</sup> sympathy with them, which a friend of the American  
& Map. Societies cannot feel. I do not see it quite in that  
light. I think the B. & F. Society are to be honored for much  
service rendered to the Antislavery Cause; and their invitation to  
F. D. showed at least a willingness to let a friend of the Amer.  
Society have free speech on their platform. Douglass had thus the  
opportunity of correcting some errors, removing some prejudices, and  
creating a favorable feeling towards the real Antislavery laborers  
of this country; and I am <sup>not</sup> sorry he availed of it. If the B. and  
F. Society do not, when the case is well understood, assume a different  
attitude towards the Amer. Society, they will stand in a measure  
self-condemned. I think they will be cautious about attacking  
the "League". — Yes! Mr. Thacker's article, in the Inquirer of Aug. 22<sup>d</sup>,  
is a most excellent one. How manfully he takes his position, a  
high & bold one — bold, I think, even in your country! how well  
he maintains that position! & how conclusively he shows that he  
could not, conscientiously & honestly, stop short of it. It is one of the  
best things, in my judgment (not disinterested, perhaps), that I have ever  
read in the "Inquirer". — You do not say what you thought of H. C.  
Wright, after seeing him. Did you have any conversation with him?  
I wish too you would tell me how you liked James Haughton of Dublin;  
I was much taken with him; — I thought him brave and gentle; fearless,  
yet kind.

of R. D. Webb I saw less; he was not in Dublin till the last day, <sup>but one</sup> of my  
being there; but I was much impressed in his favour. He seemed a man  
of much mental vigour, with an unusually clear moral perception,  
estimating men and events very accurately, one in both whose  
judgment and friendship perfect reliance might be placed. I have  
been greatly pleased with his letters to the "Nat. A.S. Standard".

The "Christian Register" of Boston has published James Haughton's letter  
(from the "Inquirer") about Mrs. Dana of South Carolina, and her recent  
conversion to Unitarianism, prefixing it with some dreadful cant, as  
it appears to me. It misrepresents, I think, Mr. Haughton's article.  
I should have preferred that Mr. H. had waited, till he had ascer-  
tained Mrs. D.'s exact position as to Slavery, but I cannot see that  
he has done her injustice, or written in an improper or unkind  
spirit towards her. He seems disposed to allow for her situation,  
for the effect of her mental struggles & trials.

We will see if  
the Register will re-publish, from the Inquirer, Mr. Hincks's article.

I will warrant, not. Anything calculated to help the Antislavery  
cause here, would be quite another matter from an article which  
could be served up, so as to bring ~~some~~ censure & odium upon it.

The editor, J. H. Morison, is a man of some ability, but the most wanting  
in nerve, in spirit, in pluck (is this an Americanism?) of almost  
any man I know. He will make, sometimes, a pretty fair remark,  
one, I mean, of some decided character; but rarely fails to tip it all over,

by some salvo or qualification, intimating that he means <sup>in such case</sup> nobody in  
particular. Dr. Gannett too has this notion, to me strange & absurd —

that we have no right ever to call in question a man's motives; we may  
condemn a system, an act, as wrong in itself; but are never authorized to  
~~say~~ pronounce any man, or set of men, <sup>criminal,</sup> ~~guilty,~~ however bad the acts they  
commit; — they may, for aught we know, be perfectly honest, upright, & pure — in  
their hearts! So I understand him — at least as referring to all Slaveholders — from

repeated conversation. He has repeatedly been very angry with me for

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bringing Slavery before the Unitarian meetings, and has talked to me most bitterly (in any other man, I should say, outrageously) before the meeting, and in public streets. Nevertheless, Mr. Gannett is magnanimous; if he feels that he has wronged any one, he ~~will make~~ is forward to make reparation, if possible as public as the wrong. He is very sensitive on this point. He warms quickly, and when warm says the very most extravagant things against the Abolitionists that I ever heard from a reputable man - so that his theory & practice, in this regard, are in my view far enough from consistent. Entire silence, on this matter of Slavery, he holds to be the duty of the North!! But I wander from the more appropriate topics of my letter.

Wednesday Sept. 30.

Do you have seen Elisha Burritt, our "learned blacksmith"! He lives in Worcester, 6 miles only from Leicester, and his paper, the "Christian Citizen", is much valued. He is an indefatigable worker, but apt to be led away by visionary aims, I think, and hardly enough emancipated from the "fear of the folks." But I believe him a very good and honest man, with a great deal of sensibility, & sympathy with the less favored portion of our brethren, everywhere. I should like your opinion of him.

I had hoped Mr. Garrison would have handed to you <sup>in London</sup> the packet I sent by him, with the letter of introduction to you which I gave him. But I am glad that, entirely occupied as he was with such important labours, he did not ~~quite~~ overlook it altogether. I thank you for the "Bristol Mercury", reporting the meeting at which the Mayor presided, and containing a very good anti-Slavery editorial, and other pieces; I sent it to the "Standard".

I entirely agree with you that Douglass intended no disparaging reflection on the Unitarians, when he ~~spoke~~ alluded to the fact that they ~~do~~ <sup>do</sup> not assume to prescribe terms of their own for admission to the Communion Table; though if his manner was, as you say, "not courteous", it is no wonder that some were annoyed. I presume that all he meant to say was this, that Unitarians cannot be judged by the same rule which is applicable to all the self-styled evangelical denominations, in the matter of going to the Communion Table with Slaveholders, &c. &c. That act, in the evangelical bodies, is

an act of fellowship, a sign of union; with the Unitarians, it is not, necessarily, anything of the kind. An act of commemoration of their Lord, they feel no warrant to forbid any one coming to it, who ~~should~~ may desire to do so; though, by a purely moral influence, they may easily keep the rite from being trifled with, and may make it a powerful means of affecting the wrong-doer. ~~Mr. Douglass~~ Douglass should <sup>not</sup> have said what would give a false idea of the Unit<sup>n</sup>. position. I hope no venous prejudice will be awakened against him by it.

The "Evangelical Alliance" I regard as formed to uphold and strengthen the orthodox sects, quite as much against the heretical, free-thinking & speaking portions of the religious world, as against the Catholics. It does look, too, as if it meant to take Slaveholding under its wing; and, if so, it will be despicable and short-lived.

I am thankful that Garrison was in England at the time when so many American Reverend Slaveholders and Pro-Slavery Men were there. The fact that they so generally refused to attend the Antislavery ~~League~~ meeting, must be a significant one to British lookers-on.

Our shameful war with Mexico still hangs on. We have a report, (but I question its correctness) that Gen. Taylor has commenced his march for Monterey with 12,000 men, provisioned for 30 days. Sickness has been very prevalent and very fatal <sup>among</sup> the American troops. The issue - so far as fighting goes - will be disastrous to the Americans, I firmly believe; and if there must be fighting, which I do not desire, I hope the United States arms will be defeated. Meanwhile, <sup>the</sup> Mexican authorities are said to have referred Pres. Polk's peace proposals to their Congress, which does not regularly assemble until December.

I must say a word with regard to the Controversy you have had - more particularly in Bristol - about the British and Foreign School Society. I read the various proceedings, Speeches, discussions, &c. with great interest; and was not a little gratified at witnessing the triumph which good sense and common honesty obtained over bigotry and usurpation.

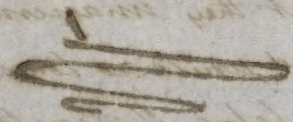
You have referred to my reasons for leaving Leicester, or rather for leaving my Society here. So far as I can state them briefly, they are mainly these: - I found I could not continue in the Society, and preach honestly

and conscientiously, without a contention with one or two individuals, I think I should say, only one. All the rest of the Society, those who sympathized with me in my antislavery views, and those who did not, were entirely willing that I should preach what, and ~~how~~<sup>as</sup>, I felt it my duty to preach. One year ago last day, I asked a dismission from my office on the ground of a want of entire harmony. The Society unanimously, (~~the~~<sup>me</sup> individuals above referred to making himself prominent by friendly protestations towards me) desired me to withdraw my request, & continue their minister as formerly. I distinctly said, in a written reply, that, if I did so, I should consider that they unanimously accorded my right to speak & act with entire freedom, & would no longer condemn me for it. This was admitted. But, before 2 months had elapsed, the man I have referred to, a passionate & unreasonable man, took offence because I took a prominent part in a "First of August Celebration, and obtained the use of our Meetinghouse for it. I took no particular notice of his conduct, but gave him time to cool off, and redeem his promises. But he would not; he continued obtuse & obstinate; and as I had<sup>had</sup> many years' experience & trial of him, I determined to have no longer connexion with him; furthermore, I thought I would relieve the Society from the consequences of such a contention, & give them an opportunity ~~of~~ of doing better, with another minister. accordingly, when one year had elapsed from May 1845, I renewed my request for dismission. The Society is small and needs entire harmony among its members. I do not myself put the least value, or dependence, upon the adherence of the man, I have referred to, to the Society; but as there are some who, I suppose, do, I will not stand in the way of ~~the Society~~ what they may deem the Society's prosperity. I shall be ready to settle again in the Ministry, provided I can find a place where I shall not have to contend with the Society for the right of preaching the Gospel; that right granted, I ask no one to accept any conclusions of mine, unless they seem just and true and right to his own conscience. At present I have found no such Society, though I have made no particular efforts, indeed. The pulpit is not yet free, though it is growing freer, most evidently. - I should like to send you the closing sermons of my ministry; you might not

guide the time needful for reading them, and would perhaps get a more correct view of my past relations to my <sup>late</sup> Society, here. — Meanwhile, as I have a house & home in Leicester, I remain here, generally absent on Sunday, preaching in one or another place. I shall hope to know more decidedly, ere long, what I am to do. — But I am sure you will rejoice to see the end of this letter.

AMERICA  
OCT 14

Per Steamship }  
October 14



To John B. Estlin Esq.

44 Park Street.

Bristol.  
[England.]

1848

I shall take an early flight, to reach you by Liverpool, & thence to New York, & will be with you on the 1st of Nov. My sincere respects to your family, & believe me, with affectionate regards, I remain, Sir, your obedient servant, Wm. M. Mair

You spoke of having learned, at Chapman's (London), that J. Munroe's charges on packets forwarded to him, are very high. It is so, and has long been a matter of complaint among booksellers in Boston. But you need give yourself no uneasiness as to what I have paid on packages coming through his hands. You have not very often given me the opportunity; and a package from you is always welcomed. My own book-business is mainly done with Crosby & Nichols. But they are young men, of not much capital, and their business is necessarily limited. Munroe's is comparatively large, and the smaller establishments, having any business with Chapman, ~~are~~ send & receive through him and so are somewhat in his power. They grumble, but nothing more, as yet.

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